

From: [Chen, Isaac](#)
To: [Honker, William](#); [Dwyer, Stacey](#); [Larsen, Brent](#)
Cc: [Garcia, David](#)
Subject: RE: NPR Houston/ fracking chemicals in GOM
Date: Monday, September 19, 2016 2:20:00 PM
Attachments: [image004.png](#)

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Hi David,

Sorry for the short notice but we're looking for some basic facts about the NPDES permits for the Gulf of Mexico. The Center for Biological Diversity is raising concerns in a comment to Region 4 concerning the release of drilling or "frackcing" chemicals into the Gulf of Mexico. See news release I copied below.

But my question: they're talking about Region 4 and a pending permit for the eastern Gulf. Is there a difference in what's allowed in the Western Gulf and Region 6?

I'm writing a piece by about 3pm so again, sorry for the short notice but if there's anything you can point me to, that'd be appreciated.

News Release * The Center for Biological Diversity * September 19, 2016

Contact: Kristen Monsell, (510) 844-7137, kmonsell@biologicaldiversity.org

Obama Administration Urged to Halt Dumping of Offshore Fracking Waste Into Gulf of Mexico

Proposed Permit Threatens Sea Turtles, Fish, Other Gulf Wildlife

ATLANTA— An Obama administration proposal to continue allowing oil companies to dump unlimited amounts of offshore fracking chemicals into the Gulf of Mexico violates federal law and threatens endangered marine wildlife, the Center for Biological Diversity warned over the weekend.

In a letter to the Environmental Protection Agency on a proposed wastewater discharge permit for offshore oil and gas drilling activities in the eastern Gulf of Mexico, the Center explained that the proposed permit violates the Clean Water Act because it causes an undue degradation of the marine environment. “The permit allows the unlimited discharge of produced wastewater, including the unlimited discharge of chemicals used in offshore fracking and other well-stimulation treatments,” the letter noted.

“The EPA is endangering an entire ecosystem by allowing the oil industry to dump unlimited amounts of fracking chemicals and drilling waste fluid into the Gulf of Mexico,” said Center attorney Kristen Monsell. “This appalling plan from the agency that’s supposed to protect our water violates federal law and shows a disturbing disregard for offshore fracking’s toxic threats to sea turtles and other Gulf wildlife.”

Today’s letter also points out that the EPA is relying on a 33-year-old study of waste fluid produced by offshore platforms, despite the drilling of more than 450 wells in the area since 2010 alone. The letter urges EPA to adopt a zero-discharge requirement for produced water and fracking chemicals, as is required under other offshore drilling permits.

At least 10 fracking chemicals routinely used in offshore fracking could kill or harm a broad variety of marine species, including marine mammals and fish, Center scientists have [found](#). The California Council on Science and Technology has identified some common fracking chemicals to be among the most toxic in the world to marine animals.

Fracking chemicals raise grave ecological concerns because, among other factors, the Gulf of Mexico is important habitat for whales, sea turtles and fish, and contains critical habitat for imperiled loggerhead sea turtles. Dolphins and other species in the Gulf are still suffering lingering effects from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

As explained in the letter, the EPA is proposing to allow oil companies to discharge fracking chemicals without even knowing how much fracking has, or would, occur in the Gulf by relying on data from 1988. Information recently obtained by the Center indicates that oil companies were permitted to frack more than 1,200 times from more than 600 wells from 2010 to 2014 alone. And the agency is relying on more than 30-year-old data to estimate the volume of produced water to be discharged.

“The Obama administration can’t just turn a blind eye to how offshore fracking could hurt the Gulf’s wildlife,” Monsell added. “It’s the EPA’s job to protect water quality from offshore fracking, not rubberstamp the dumping of the wastewater from this dangerous, disgusting practice.”

The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization

with more than 1.1 million members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.

Best regards,

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